

Go Global with Fisher

Rotterdam School of Management - Rotterdam, Netherlands: From a Student's Perspective



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This booklet is designed by past Student Exchange participants in order to share their experience and knowledge with students participating in the Fisher International Student Exchange. Items in this booklet are not endorsed by the Office of Global Business at Fisher College and information contained in this booklet is subject to change.

ACCOMMODATIONS

Apartment Search

- Students currently living in the city can be very helpful in securing accommodations as they can answer specific questions about location. In the past Fisher students have worked with their Rotterdam School of Management (RSM) buddies to determine which housing options are appropriate.
- RSM university administrators can also be helpful, as can past students who have lived and studied in Rotterdam.
- A few areas that are attractive to RSM students living in Rotterdam are Kralingen, Coolhaven, and downtown Rotterdam. Kralingen is within walking distance of RSM, while the Coolhaven and downtown areas require public transit or bicycle for access to the university. Generally, students are encouraged to find accommodations north of the river. Generally, the apartments are cheaper and larger further away from campus.
- Stadswonen (Dutch for city living) is the agency recommended by RSM. Stadswonen owns properties throughout Rotterdam.
- Both Casa Erasmus and The International House are encouraged and lie in the heart of Kralingen. Many Stadswonen options are similar to dorm style housing in which students have their own room, but share a kitchen and bathroom with one or two other internationals in the unit. This option can be great for networking in the international community.
- International House at RSM is said to be a great way to meet a lot of international students, however it is very small and often thought to not be worth the money. (2012)
- Conform Makelaar has been used by past students and is very helpful in securing exactly the type of apartment desired. They do require a mediation fee that can be quite expensive and sometimes more than one month's rent. Conform or other similar agencies are recommended for groups of students that wish to live together.
- Facebook Marketplace can be a great way to find a sublease for the semester. Just as Fisher students are travelling abroad during the fall, so too are students from RSM.
- The Student Hotel (not a hotel but a place for students to live) is said to be worth the money to live in. (2012)
- HousingAnywhere (<https://housinganywhere.com/>), created and developed by RSM business students, is another venue to find housing in Rotterdam. Although it is recommended to take safety pre-cautions when securing housing through this site. (2012)
- Beware of Craigslist. There are a number of scams out there and it has happened to Fisher students in the past. If you are unsure, ask for help from the Fisher International Programs Office staff.

How to validate housing opportunities

- This can be quite tricky. Asking university administrators about rental agreements can be beneficial. Sticking to an agency that has been used in the past may be a good bet. Beware of Craigslist. There are a number of scams out there and it has happened to Fisher students in the past. If you are unsure, ask for help from the Fisher International Programs Office staff.



What to expect

- Space in Rotterdam can be quite smaller than what is expected by American students. Knowing the dimensions of your living space can be helpful, but remember that a conversion is necessary between square meters and square feet.
- Setup truly depends on the type of housing a student secures. While Stadswonen options are often setup as dorms, an apartment can have various types of layouts. Many Rotterdam apartments are two bedroom flats, while others are two stories. Few apartments are available for more than two tenants, but they do exist.
- When securing an apartment it is important to know that it is furnished. Many short-term leases are available for furnished apartments that often cater to students.
- If a student must cancel a housing agreement, it is generally accepted in The Netherlands that any cancellation made within one month prior to the start date is considered late and the student may incur a penalty.

When you first arrive

- Because RSM orientation is usually the final week of August and many leases begin the first of September, students may find themselves without housing for a few nights upon arrival. RSM recommends a number of hostels for students in Rotterdam. Sometimes Dutch Buddies will offer accommodation for the first few nights. Please be aware of this timing issue and book hostels early.
- The international office at RSM will be happy to store luggage for the first week. This option allows students to use a small bag for a few days until they are settled and can move their luggage into their scheduled accommodation.

DOCUMENTS

Passport

- Passports should be secured as soon as possible. They are required not only for travel overseas, but also for application to RSM among other things.
- Check expiration date. In the past students have failed to realize that their passports expire during their trip which can cause serious issues with reentry to the United States.
- It is a good idea to keep several copies of all relevant documents on you at all times: licenses, residency cards, passports, visas, enrollment verifications, whatever has been issued to you. This is not required but you may find yourself in a situation in which these things would be extremely helpful to have and save time.

Residence permits

- A residence permit is necessary in The Netherlands if a student plans to stay for longer than three months (90 days). If a student is participating in an RSM minor program only and does not plan to stay for the entire semester, a resident permit may not be necessary. This may also depend on the length of the housing agreement. For more information about resident permits, visit <http://www.netherlands-embassy.org/article>.

asp?articleref=AR00000409EN.

- The Dutch can be stringent with this process. It is recommended that students begin 3-5 months in advance of departure from the United States.
- The residence fee can be very expensive (~300 Euros) (2012)
- To pick up the residence permit, you will need to go to the city hall. You will need to transfer money proving that you can afford to live in Rotterdam. This will need to be transferred to a Rotterdam bank account all in one lump sum of money (~5,000 Euros, including the residence fee) (2012)
- Bring multiple copies of your passport photo, you may need to use them for different ID's. (2012)

Student Visa

- In the past, students traveling to The Netherlands for study are not required to obtain a student visa. However, visa regulations may change, so please check the embassy website before you travel.
- If students have any questions about obtaining a visa, Travel Solutions can help. Found here: <http://controller.osu.edu/travel/travel-agencies.shtm>. Or call Travel Solutions by phone at 877-678-8785 or 614-750-4020, ask for a Visa Expert.

Proof of enrollment

- RSM will provide students with a formal document for proof of enrollment. At the bottom are tear away business card size official copies. These may be useful for setting up banking and also when traveling.



Health Insurance

- Ohio State requires that outgoing students purchase the HTH Supplemental Insurance, this will cover the student's time while studying. However, if a student decided to travel before or after specific program dates, the HTH supplemental insurance will not cover any illness or injury. It is recommended that students contact their health insurance providers before traveling. In the case that a student requires medical attention out of the HTH time period, it is important to know how to deal with copayments, insurance, etc. Specific questions about health insurance can be directed to OIA (Office of International Affairs).

FOOD AND DRINK

Blaak Market

- Rotterdam offers an open air market every Tuesday and Saturday at Blaak. Food items purchased at the market are often less expensive and fresher than what is available at the grocery. The market is also good when shopping for gifts, bicycle supplies, toiletries, etc.

Grocery Stores

- Grocery stores are abundant in Rotterdam. A few of the common names are Albert Heijn, P.L.U.S, and Super de Boer (Dutch for Super Farmer). Spar is a nearby place perfect for quick lunches and a cheap sandwich.

On Campus

- Erasmus University offers a number of options for eating on campus. There is one large dining hall as well as a few smaller areas that offer items such as sandwiches, coffee and pastry.

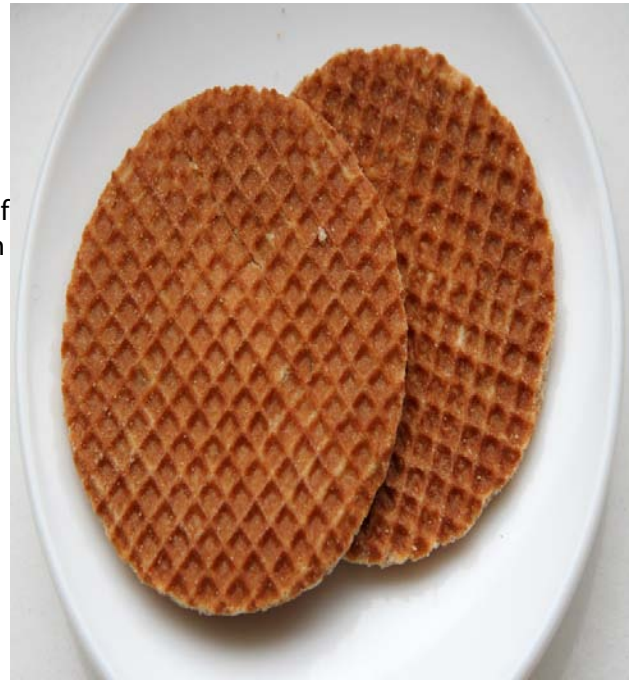
Dining

- Though Indonesian food is often considered "the stuff to eat" in Holland, it can be quite expensive and difficult to find in Rotterdam. If Indonesian food is what you want, maybe try "bami goreng" (noodles) or "nasi goreng" (rice).
- The most highly recommended dish of past students can be found in kebab places and is called "kap salon" (Dutch for hair salon). A fast food style chain called Has Kebab is arguably the best and cheapest place to get this.
- Holland is known for its cheeses. If truly a cheese lover, travel to Gouda for the day and dine on the most amazing cheeses imaginable. Great options are also available at the open air market.
- The tap water in Holland is totally safe and drinkable.
- Bazaar is a very popular weekend restaurant with great Moroccan and Turkish dishes.
- Stroopwafels are a must try! They are sold everywhere but best from street vendors when they are fresh.
- The area of Endrachtsplein is full of local restaurants and nightlife. Concordia is a favorite among students.

MONEY

Using an ATM

- Though additional costs may be incurred, using an American bank card at an ATM can be a quick and easy way to withdraw cash. Withdrawals will be made in Euros but will show up on an account statement as withdrawals in the appropriate amount of dollars. Often cash is the best way to purchase items while both traveling and in country.
- ATMs are readily available and easy to find.
- Students have found that some banks charge a percentage of the amount that you withdraw internationally. Key Bank charges a flat fee when money is withdrawn and this usually proves to be a better option. Talk to your bank about the different options they offer.
- While cash is the only form of payment taken at many places, be smart about the amount that you carry at any given time. Carrying an excessive amount of money makes you more vulnerable in certain situations. The stores that have high price tags will most likely take credit cards.



Establishing a bank account in your host country

- Banking in The Netherlands can be quite a pain, but may be necessary for payment of utilities, etc. ING offers free accounts for students. There is an ING walk-in friendly bank in the center of the city near Beurs. Students will need their Rotterdam address, proof of enrollment at RSM, and a valid passport.
- Access to online banking is recommended and requires a working mobile phone number. Be aware not to change your phone number after setting up banking until you have received confirmation and your account is ready to use.
- The process of setting up banking usually takes about two weeks.

Credit and Bank Cards

- Credit cards do work in some places, but often are not accepted unless they have a special type of chip. This chip allows businesses to directly withdraw money from the account, similar to a debit card. A Dutch bank account comes along with this type of chip card. Therefore, money can be deposited into the account and used via the chip.
- It may be possible to get a chip attached to a student's American credit card, but this must be taken up with the credit card company in advance of leaving the country.
- Bank cards are not accepted except for use with ATMs.
- Make sure you check bank fees. If students choose to use their card for minor purchases the fees can accrue quickly. It is a better idea to carry some cash around with you for this reason.
- Students are encouraged to write down the customer service numbers on all credit cards and keep the numbers with them in case cards are stolen and cancellation is necessary.



Travelers Checks

- Though travelers' checks may have once been the safest way to manage money while traveling, they may not be the best option. Traveler's checks are only good once converted to the Euro. Therefore, if a student plans to use traveler's checks, it is recommended that this be only part of the whole money management scheme.

Other

- Past students have recommended having backup solutions to problems you might face in advance. For example losing your credit card. Come up with a backup plan to what you would do if this were to happen because it takes a while to get a new credit card to be sent overseas. (i.e.: have a second credit card stored in a different place, pay for the entire group dinner when going out and then have everyone pay back in cash, etc.) (2013)
- Past students have recommended making a rough budget for your expenses abroad to avoid missing out in activities at the end of the semester. For example, one student limited her expenses to \$2000 a month while abroad. (2013)

For more information about using credit cards and ATMs abroad and the related fees, visit http://www.flyerguide.com/wiki/index.php/Credit/Debit/ATM_Cards_and_Foreign_Exchange

PHONE AND INTERNET

Using a phone from home

- If planning to use a phone from home, do homework with respect to cost. In the past students have realized that using devices such as smartphones with international capabilities can be much more expensive than planned.
- An international SIM card will be necessary, and can be purchased at a phone outlet upon arriving. This has proven to be the best option for students. Some iPhones do not have compatible SIM card options. Check with your company to see if your iPhone will work abroad.
- Some phone providers have international calling to emergency numbers only, or they charge you an insane fee when used. Some students have suggested bringing your phone from home if you have this option; it gives a

sense of security when first arriving at the airport.

Buying an international phone

- Students can go to any phone provider in Holland to purchase a prepaid phone with top up credit (call minutes). There are several places to buy a cheap phone with a SIM card at the shopping center at Beurs. After the initial purchase students can buy top up credit at grocery stores around the city.
- One recommended carrier is Lebara. This carrier offers inexpensive international calling as well as great deals on top up. Lebara does not sell phones strictly for use with their service. Therefore, students must purchase an unlocked phone with which they can use a Lebara SIM card.
- Unlocked phones are available at Media Market in the city center as well as at the fresh air market. An unlocked phone will support the SIM card of any carrier. This option is recommended so that when traveling to another country for an extended period, a student can purchase a SIM card package with other providers if necessary.
- Phones and plans can be as cheap or expensive as the student makes them. An unlocked phone can be purchased for 20 euro, and top up can cost anywhere from 20 to 50 euro per month depending on usage.

International Communication

- When calling home, Skype video use is free with wifi access! This is a great option for keeping in touch with friends and family from home as well as those met while traveling.
 - Help parents and friends set up and learn how to use Skype before traveling.
 - Purchasing Skype credit allows students to call a landline or a cell phone back home at lower costs. When internet is available this can reduce the hassle involved with international calling cards. Users can also pay \$6-\$10 for a month of unlimited calls to any landline or cell phone in the U.S. from their computers.
- G-chat is also a favorite channel of communication for students. It has a G-Video option as well. It can be more convenient than Skype because it is more user-friendly. Which mode of communication you choose ultimately depends on your preferences. It is recommended to explore both programs before departure so you can inform family members which you will be using.
- If you want friends to be able to call you, leave voicemails, or leave text messages like a regular cell phone, you can sign up for Google voice. You will need to use a VPN (virtual private network) but students have said that it is well worth it. With Google voice, you receive a US telephone number that works like a landline. If you have to make business calls while abroad, this can be a great tool! For more information go to: <http://www.google.com/googlevoice/about.html>.



Internet

- RSM offers internet access to students through kiosks, computer labs and wireless while on campus. Students will be provided with a login and password upon arrival. This gives access to not only internet, but also protected RSM web pages such as the RSM email and Student-SIN page (similar to OSU's Carmen). There is also a way to get complete wireless access that does not require login for each session on a student's own laptop. The Student Help Desk on the third floor of the T-Building can help set this up.
- Internet cafes are not common in Rotterdam. Some restaurants, cafes and coffee shops offer wireless access, but to

find them may take a bit of searching. There is a café called The Coffee Company on Nieuwe Binnenweg near the Eendrachtsplein Metro station that offers one hour of internet with each purchase.

- In-home internet connectivity can be burdensome if not included in the rental package. Before signing up for internet, a student must have a Dutch bank account. After establishing an account, the internet provider will install an internet connection, but this usually takes 2-4 weeks. Students in this situation should work with the rental agency before arrival in attempt to resolve issues as early as possible.

SAFETY TIPS

- Rotterdam is filled with students and is therefore generally safe. Areas further away from the center might be seen as less safe.
- Most Dutch students will advise not to go to the south side of the river.
- Be aware of all surroundings and keep your items close to you at all times. If staying in hostels it is advised to bring a lock to protect your valuables. Avoid bringing anything of extreme sentimental value.
- Keep emergency numbers specific to your host country with you at all times.

TRANSPORTATION AND TRAVEL

Public Transportation

- Public transportation is available and easy to use. The Metro is an underground train and the Tram is an above ground rail car.
- To use public transit, an OV Chip card can be used. This card can be purchased at the Beurs metro station or at Rotterdam Central Station for about 7 euro. The OV Chip works like a debit card. Upon entering the tram or metro, a student will place the card near the sensor which automatically deducts 4 euro. Upon leaving, the card is again used. This time, depending on how long a passenger has ridden, the system debits back an appropriate amount to the card. Money can be added to the card at most metro terminals. It is recommended to have coins as the machines often do not accept bills
- Students are able to use a Visa card to add credit to or purchase an OV Chip card.
- When traveling within Holland, purchasing a discount card for rail travel can be cost beneficial. This card offers a 40% discount rate and can be used by up to 5 total persons traveling together in a group.
- Past students recommend buying a RotterdamPas at the RSM library. It offers a lot of discounts and tourist activity ideas. (2012)



Bicycle

- The most cost efficient way to travel is via bicycle. Talk to local students about the best place to purchase bikes, some may even have an extra bike that was left to them from previous exchange students.
- Be sure to lock the bike adequately. Locks can be purchased in the Blaak market.

International Travel

- When traveling outside of Holland, a passport is necessary. Also be aware of laws that vary from country to country.

- Students recommend purchasing the Eurorail pass; it may seem expensive at first but quickly pays for itself as you begin to travel. Most likely students will be flying out of airports (Amsterdam and Eindhoven) where it is necessary to take the train.
- For the flight over to your destination and back, utilize StudentUniverse.com. Students have had great luck with affordable prices.
- Flights around Europe can be relatively inexpensive when flying with low cost carriers. Recommended airlines are Ryanair (www.Ryanair.com), Easyjet (www.easyjet.com), and BMIBaby (www.BMIbaby.com).
- A great site for looking up flight costs is www.Skyscanner.com. This allows students to find the cheapest flights to anywhere from any airport. For a weekend traveler that doesn't care where they end up (as long as it's cheap), this site is perfect. The site combines Ryanair and Easyjet among other low cost carriers.
- With affordability comes the possibility of delays and cancellations with these airlines. They will rebook you it may just take time. Take situations in stride.
- Students have recommended avoiding AirBerlin if possible, due to their frequent delays and cancellations.
- If possible print out any boarding passes prior to arriving at the airport or you may have to pay an additional fee. Also, double and triple check your bag measurements. These airlines are very adamant on their luggage regulations and will impose hefty fees for any passengers that bags do not apply.
- Students in the past have traveled a great deal more than originally expected. Keep this in mind when budgeting and packing. Many students over pack. Appliances such as straighteners, hair dryers, electric shavers, etc can be bought in Netherlands; as well as toiletries, bedding, and many other bulky items. This will save room in your bag as well as solve any wattage conversion problems you will encounter.
- Buy plane tickets and make travel arrangements as least a week in advance if you want a cheaper price.
- Hostels are a cheap and easy accommodation for students. They are a great way to meet people and offer a fun atmosphere. For a great listing of hostels all over the world visit: www.hostelworld.com
- Many cities offer free walking tours that often meet outside a given hostel. These are both great ways to learn about different cities and meet people from all over the world. Be warned that the guides for the free walking tours are paid by way of donations and a small tip may be encouraged at the end of the tour.

Places to Visit

- Some must see places within Amsterdam are Paradise, ADE, and the Passenger Terminal.
- Some must see places in Rotterdam are the port, Erasmus Bridge, Oudehaven, Den Hague, and Euromast.
- Other cities to check out are Brussels, Barcelona, Manchester, and Prague.



UNIVERSITY TIPS

Scheduling

- When scheduling classes, the most important place to start is to know what classes the student needs for his or her planned graduation. To have very specific requirements can limit the choices for course selection.
- RSM offers a Minor Program in which the majority of international students participate. This program consists of a single course broken into modules and lasts only 10 weeks, whereas regular courses last 15 weeks. A minor counts for 15 ECTS credits which may transfer as about 9 semester credit hours at Fisher. (Although, you must get approval of how many credits you will earn before you depart the US to confirm) Choosing a minor that will count for all of the courses needed for graduation can be difficult as various minors may count toward various course credits at OSU. It is important to have a general idea of which courses will be fulfilled through the minor before leaving. Check if your courses are preapproved by Fisher's Office of Global Business before you leave.
- When scheduling multiple courses or courses above and beyond the minor, it is important to know when each course is taught. Students have run into issues in the past with overlapping courses. It may be necessary to contact an RSM administrator to make sure that classes do not overlap.
- Students in the past have not had a problem with passing classes, but keep in mind that professors are demanding. It is very important to stay current with classes or else you will feel overwhelmed towards exam time and final paper deadlines.
- Faculty for the most part are very approachable and speak good English, although not as good as many Dutch students.
- Studies at RSM will be challenging, so expect to work very diligently if you want to earn a good grade in a class. Students are expected to do a significant amount of work outside of the classroom.
- Most students live a healthy mix of school and social life, with the biggest nights on Tuesday-Thursday.
- Students also dress well for class, with many girls wearing heels even on their bikes.
- Most classes are Monday-Wednesday with some classes on Thursdays.

Buddies

- RSM has a program in which they pair incoming international students with a "Dutch Buddy" who will help with any issues upon arrival. Often these students can meet students when they arrive in Rotterdam and sometimes offer accommodation for the first night if necessary. Students are encouraged to reach out to their buddies early as they will often be among the first acquaintances in Rotterdam.

Orientation

- This is a great way to meet other international students from around the world that are also new to Rotterdam. The buddies will participate as will the administrators that work most closely with incoming international students. Orientation is the first step in building a community of friends and peers while studying at RSM. In the past, the orientation occurs over a weekend and consists of a trip to another area in the Netherlands. While students do have to pay for the trip it is strongly recommended.
- Students will also have the opportunity to sign in for Erasmus student network. This system has great student organizations for exchange students and plan many worthwhile events!

Career Fairs

- During fall semester, career fairs are common. It is helpful to know that often recruiters are interested in students for internships, which generally are not available to non-EU members. That said, career fairs can be a great way for students to build networking skills and to learn about companies that they might like to work with in the future.

Facilities

- Erasmus University offers a Sports Building that includes squash courts, multiple gymnasiums, a number of treadmills and stationary bicycles, ping pong, etc. For a fee of 50 euro, a student can purchase a sport activity card that allows access to all classes and facilities including boxing, kick-boxing, cycling, capoeira, intramural sports. An additional fee must be paid to access the weight room. There is a café in the building as well with pool, darts and TV. Though this is not the RPAC, it does give students the chance to stay healthy along with a great place to socialize on campus.

Dress

- RSM is quite different from OSU in dress. Dutch students take pride in their University experience and show it through classy dress on campus. Men often wear nice jeans with button down shirts and dressy shoes. Women are dressed to impress in jeans, heels or boots, and often flashy tops. Though it is not necessary (or even possible) to dress as well as the Dutch, wearing sweats to class is unheard of and should be avoided.

MISCELLANEOUS TIPS

Tidbits

- It is advised that you be very open minded and patient when you are on exchange. Not everything is going to go your way while abroad and you will hit major road blocks that you've never encountered before, but its best to just keep an opened mind and don't let things get you down. The times that don't go exactly as planned are going to be the biggest learning experiences. (2013)

If there are further questions or concerns, different resources are available that students can utilize. The Office of Global Business will be a resource throughout the entire trip. Past students have also volunteered to be a contact if additional questions would arise.

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